

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, December 7, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. Alexandra Hotel, Hyde Park Corner, London. Dec. 7th, (1881) My dear Mrs. Bell:

I was very glad to hear from you some days ago. I had two letters written after receiving two of mine. Neither yours or mine seem to have been in haste to reach their destination. I think you may trust all I say about the health of our family. I have not the least hesitation in saying the worst or best, as I know that before you can receive the letter a change of some kind will have taken place and a cable relieve any anxiety. Alec would have cabled Mr. and Mrs. Bell of Charlie's state, but Berta was very unwilling to disturb them and a few days later it was happily not necessary. Charlie was as sick as he could be but got well very fast. He and Berta are now here, having returned from their trip to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. Charlie seems just as well as ever, but is really not at all strong and has to be careful. Berta is very well. My sister Gertrude is also with us so that with the exception of Maurice we are a united family. Mr. Grossmann, poor fellow, is now buffeting the waves of the ocean, which from all accounts are pretty high at present. He sailed in the steamer Servia a week ago and is therefore nearly due now. My sister will return with Berta and Charlie and I am afraid Mamma will be impatient to follow them. I had hoped to have been in Nice by this time, but we are detained by the illness of both my little ones. 2 They have had severe feverish colds and have been very miserable for several days besides exciting our anxiety by their dull heavy looks. They have neither of them ever been so unwell before and we are therefore decided that London is no place for them and are anxious to get them away. Both little ones are much better now, but will not be fit to travel for a week. Then we propose going to the South of France. Alec was worn out on his return from Paris so we went off to the Isle of Wight with Berta and Charlie. We had one day's delightful drive through the island to Ventnor where we spent the night and proposed going on to

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the Needles but were summoned home to our babies. Alec however was already much benefitted and is now quite well and bright. I too, thank you, am well. It's taken me a long time to recover my strength, but I think I have succeeded.

Alec gave me such a lovely birthday present, a very large green diamond (not an emerald) surrounded by three circles, the first of white diamonds, next of sapphires and last of lovely pearls. It has also a most exquisite drop pearl. The whole forms a very handsome pendant. Papa has returned from Russia and brought me some very handsome things. One is a brass Russian samovar for making tea. I think Mr. Bell and Alec will enjoy it, for it's mode of operation is to fill the centre with lighted charcoal and let it burn all day, consequently the tea will be very strong and always ready. I have also a tiny silver bronze set of Russian tarantass with three horses on a large piece of malachite. Berta will bring you all some little Christmas greetings from us.

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Alec and Grace went to a fancy ball last night. They did not dress and I did not go as I had "nothing to wear" fancy or otherwise, but they said the ball was very nice. I should think Grace must have been tired after riding on horseback all the morning and dancing all night.

It's late and I have no news, so goodnight.

Always affectionately, Mabel.